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MR. FRANCIS WHARTON'S

Letter to Bishop H. W. Lee,

ON

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

KING & BAIRD, PRS. SANSOM ST. PHILADA.

A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT REV. H. W. LEE, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF IOWA,

ON THE

Present Condition of the Domestic Missions

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BY

FRANCIS WHARTON.

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PREFACE.

At the meeting of the Board of Missions, in October last, a motion was made by the Rev. Dr. Talbot, to request the Domestic Committee, at the next meeting of the Board, to report "whether any, and if any, what modifications may be made in the present mode of conducting the important work of Domestic Missions, with special reference to the concentration of Missionary operations upon strong points, and the better support of the Missionaries to whom such points are, or shall be, committed." An amendment was offered by Mr. Francis Wharton, that the reference be to a Special instead of to the Domestic Committee. This amendment was accepted by the Rev. Dr. Talbot, and the resolution, as amended, passed. The committee appointed were the Bishops of Iowa and California, the Rev. Drs. Talbot and Balch, Rev. J. S. C. Greene, and Messrs. Baldwin and F. Wharton. The following pages relate to the first branch of the subject referred to the committee.

RIGHT REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

You have been good enough to say, that in the exercise of your functions as Chairman of a Committee appointed at the last Board of Missions, to consider the present condition of our home field, you would be glad to have me place before you in a permanent shape, the views which I informally mentioned to you in conversation, but which, from my inability to attend the meetings of the committee, I may be unable fully to present to yourself and my other colleagues in the committee in any other form than the present. I willingly avail myself of this opportunity. The topic is one which deserves the fullest consideration that it may be in the power of each of us to give. As a Church, we are really at the outset of our home missionary work. Much it is true has been done, and done well and faithfully, but the pattern which was sufficient for the work in former days, must fail, in proportions at least, to meet the want of the days to come. Since the formation of our present Missionary Board, our country has grown from something less than a province, to now something more than an empire. Abroad we have become a first class power, with but three others to rival us on land, and but one other at sea. At home our population has nearly doubled, our territory entirely so. Nor

has our particular communion failed to make an almost corresponding advance. If in missionary extension, she has not quite kept pace with the extraordinary extension of the country in which she exists, she has at least assumed in her supreme legislative councils a more imperial attitude, and gathered strength and energy for the great work with which she is charged. She has cast aside the shackles of the eclectic and exclusive, and has stood forth free and catholic, as it becomes one worthy to be the popular Church of the Anglo-Saxon race in the future, as she was their national Church in the past. She has declared herself not merely a Missionary Church, but a Church for Missions. Whatever service it may be necessary to adopt, in order to introduce God's word into the remote cabin in the Missouri Valley or the school-house in the district where the school-master has preceded the settled Minister, this service she has declared it consistent with her ritual to permit. It can no longer be said, that the very grandeur of her structure unfits her for the minute and humble work of exploration.

With, however, this enfranchisement of the missionary energy of the Church, it has become a matter of grave consideration how far there has been a commensurate extension and improvement of her missionary machinery. The present constitution of our Board of Missions, it is true, has the great advantage of being in some respects so far flexible and elastic as to be able to expand by its own action with the necessities of the communion of which it is the organ. In its organic structure, it exhibits a Central Board, elected triennially by the General Convention, to whom, (together with the life members of a former organization now extinct,) is committed almost the entire work of the financial, and no small part of the executive management of the home

field. This Board for some years vested its power in this respect in a committee stationed in New York. In 1853, however, an organization sprang up in Philadelphia, called the Episcopal Missionary Association for the West, engaged in like manner in collecting funds, and distributing them at its election among missionaries in the West. This Association has been several times, in language more or less emphatic, sanctioned by the Board of Missions as an auxiliary to the Domestic Committee. On one occasion, the Board, through a special committee, expressly invited the organization of similar associations throughout our whole land: and at the very last meeting of the Board, a suggestion, (bearing however on its face something more than a mere recommendatory force,) was made, that hereafter the officers of the Domestic Committee acknowledge the contributions made through the Missionary Association for the West at the same time and through the same organ as their own. If I understand our present missionary policy, it is to prescribe no single monopoly-agency through which, and by which, the contributions of the Church are to be arbitrarily dispensed, but to leave it open to individual donors to select, according to their judgment, either personally or through committees, such missions and missionaries, among those sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority, as they prefer. It is on this policy that I propose now to submit a few remarks.

It is to the Church of England that we may naturally look for information as to the practical development of missionary effort in a communion such as our own. To that communion we are bound not only by affection, but by sympathy. We have common institutions as well as a common parentage. We have in its practical working, if not in the method of appointment, the same system of executive government. We have

the same articles and the same liturgy. But beyond all this, we have the same claims to catholicity, if not to nationality. Neither communion was framed to cover up and maintain the retreat of any particular eclectic system. The creed of neither was so drawn as to give exclusive expression to either the one side or the other in any of the great permissible controversies by which the Church has been agitated. Both communions, in fact, were so framed as to make them large enough to hold each of the several orthodox schools which might exist in the communities in which these Churches reside. The way which the Church of England has found to be the best for carrying on the missionary work must always possess to us, therefore, a value by way of example which can never belong to the method adopted by those Protestant bodies who, for reasons I may presently touch upon, have at various periods withdrawn from the Mother Church.

Both in Home and in Foreign Missions, the policy of the Church of England is to invite each of her members to contribute to the missionary cause through the agency which those members conscientiously prefer. In the home field, it is true, there are no societies of a general missionary character, from the fact that within that field, there is no point outside of the limit of a regularly organized diocese. But for special purposes there exists a series of voluntary societies, all of which operate independently of any central governmental power. They have the Pastoral Aid Society, almost tantamount to a General Missionary Society, which was founded in 1836, and which assumes the office not only of aiding destitute Pastors, but of appointing and supporting lay scripture readers, to permeate the whole community. They have the Curates' Aid Society, founded a year or so afterwards, occupying the same field, with the exception

that the contributors to the latter reject—and here was one of the reasons for the division of the organization—the lay scripture-reading feature which the former considers so important. Nor does this separation of agencies continue from inadvertence, or from the ignorance of the Church as to its existence. It was brought prominently before the Church in 1842, by the late Bishop of London, a prelate committed to the belief, that a compulsory, though it may be benignant moderatism could concentrate and then distribute the energies of a national and comprehensive Church. But even Bishop Bloomfield was forced, after the subject had been fully and anxiously discussed, to acquiesce in the position, that liberty of selection on the part of the contributor is essential both to the true development of the missionary feeling, and the true expansion of the missionary field. So it is, that the Pastoral Aid Society and the Curates' Aid Society continue to act upon the same subject-matter in a harmony which shows that an open and avowed division of opinion in distinct organizations is far less turbulent than a struggling for supremacy in one; and with a success which proves that by opening new feeders from new fountains, we may indefinitely augment the stream.

It is so, also, with the societies for the spread of the Gospel in Ireland. Two existed for that purpose, each voluntary, and each acting in Ireland within diocesan limits. In this case the attempt at a fusion was actually carried out. But so greatly inferior was the working of the machinery of the joint agency, to that of the two as separate, that the union was afterwards dissolved, and the two societies restored to their former individuality.

I pass this, however, to consider the policy of the English Church in the foreign missionary field. As

exhibiting this policy, the following brief statement may not be out of place.

The first of the present English missionary societies was started on March 8, 1698, at a room in Gray's Inn belonging to Mr. Justice Hook. At this meeting only five persons were present: Francis, the second Lord Guildford; Sir Humphrey Mackworth; the Rev. Dr. Bray, who deserves grateful mention as having served with great fidelity as Commissary of the Bishop of London in Maryland; Colonel Colchester, and Mr. Justice Hook. The meeting was not authoritatively called, nor had the scheme at any of its stages the initiative sanction of either Convocation or Parliament. The object of the association was declared to be threefold: 1st. The education of the poor; 2d. The care of our Colonies; and 3d. The printing and circulating books of sound Christian doctrine. Lord Guildford, a layman, was appointed a committee to confer with Archbishop Tennison on the subject of the first point. In respect to the second, Dr. Bray, who, though a clergyman, was acting in no representative capacity, was requested to lay before the society his scheme for promoting religion in the plantations, and his accounts of benefactions and disbursements towards the same. On the basis of this plan was shortly after organized the society which now bears the name of the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." A charter was soon obtained from the crown, not, however, as securing any monopoly prerogatives, but solely for the purpose of enabling the society to hold real estate, and to assume the functions of a body politic. Membership in the corporation was voluntary, being vested in all contributors, members of the Church of England.

To Dr. Bray's continued energy another and still

more effective movement in the same direction is due. He soon found the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge not a little embarrassed by the multiplicity of the functions committed to it. His next attempt was to procure authoritative sanction for a new and distinct Foreign Missionary Society. In this he failed. "The only way then,"—I quote from Mr. Anderson's History of the Colonial Church,*—"by which it seemed possible to obtain the desired object, *was by the voluntary association of faithful and zealous men.*" The result of his renewed efforts was "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." Like its predecessor, it was voluntary in its origin, and independent of the Church in its government. It was, and continues, a distinct corporation, which neither Parliament nor Convocation can reach. In one sense, but in one sense only, it has had governmental sanction. Queen's letters, as they were denominated, were issued annually, invoking the contributions of the Parish Churches to a series of objects, of which the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was always one. This recommendation, however, coupled with the fact that this society was then the sole strictly missionary agency in foreign lands, gave it a practical monopoly of its own peculiar work.

For a century this condition of things continued. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel did its work always with caution and care, and often with zeal and efficiency. Its government, as era followed era, responded, though not in very quick time, to the prevailing sentiment in the Church in which it worked. In its early years it was enthusiastic and active, uniting, with the ardor of youth, not a little of the polemical zeal as well as the evangelical earnestness which Burnet

* Vol. II., p. 410.

impressed upon his pupils. But as the society grew older, its members became more circumspect and conservative. The frigid latitudinarianism of the episcopate from 1720 to 1780 was enough to paralyze any missionary effort in its midst. The movement party, with whom the society originated, soon gave way to others, who were as nervously afraid of indecent haste as their predecessors were of sluggish inaction. There was no agitation without, and soon there was no agitation within. The consequence was that the Propagation Society, though the sole Anglican agency for foreign missions, collected on an average from 1769 to 1788 only £4,414; from 1789 to 1808 the still less average annual sum of £3,780.

That such an agency as this would meet the emergencies of the great movement in the English Church of 1790–1800, could hardly be expected. Between those who then controlled the Propagation Society, and Mr. Cecil, Mr. Newton, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Zachary Macaulay, and Mr. Pratt, there was necessarily not only a divergence in sentiment, but a divergence as to the best way of carrying out even a common design. I am not forced here to say that between the leaders of the evangelical revival of that period, and those who then held most of the appointments of the English Church, there was any very material difference in doctrine. So far as the present argument requires me to speak, it might be conceded that no serious difference existed. But that there was a vast difference in the way those common truths were received and uttered, no one will now deny. Putting this difference down at its lowest figure, it is one which not only will exist in all stages of society, but will involve, in missionary questions, a great divergence of opinion as to the most efficient instrumentalities. There will be found in every

community those who look wistfully at the past, but despondingly towards the future,—who would preserve old fashions, even though sometimes, from the change of subject-matter, these fashions, if continued, would themselves become novelties,—and who shrink instinctively from all innovations, even though such innovations are necessary to counteract the destructive approaches of time. There are those also more ardent, but less reflective, who see in change itself a medicine, and who seek in new machinery that strength which perhaps still remains in the old. Neither element is often found residing with the other in the same breast. Perhaps it is the highest order of statesmanship alone, that possesses the two. Both tempers, however, are largely found in society, and the free development of each is necessary, not only to produce that healthy agitation so essential to the body politic, but to carry on those great measures of conservative reform on which the proper progress of our race so much depends. It will be a sad day for the Church when it is decided that within her borders, not merely this freedom of agency must cease, but the energies in whose action and counteraction life consists, must be crushed under the thraldom of a compulsory uniformity.

The first movement towards the organization of a new society was in 1798. Some years before, a social meeting had been opened for religious exercises and literary culture by a few of the London clergy and laity. The first meeting of this body, which took the name of the Eclectic Society, was held on January 16, 1783. There were present the Rev. John Newton, the Rev. Henry Foster, the Rev. Richard Cecil, and Eli Bates, Esq. Subsequently, Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Venn and Mr. Pratt, became members. The first movement of a public character was on February 4, 1799,

when Mr. Pratt introduced to the Society a question as to the propriety of establishing a periodical religious publication. This movement eventuated in the issue of the London Christian Observer, and was immediately followed by a proposition by the Rev. John Venn, Rector of Clapham, to form a Society on a new and independent basis, for the purpose of carrying on the foreign missionary work. That the new society was intended to give expression to the distinctive convictions of the earnest-minded men who united in forming it, is evidenced by the draft of the original proceedings found in Mr. Venn's notes. "Let us regard ourselves," Mr. Pratt is reported by Mr. Venn as saying, "as forming the society. * * It should be known that there is such a design. Fix upon persons to write to. Must be kept in evangelical hands." It is obvious, therefore, that the object of the society was to afford a distinctive agency to a phase of missionary zeal, which, to say the least of it, is a legitimate element in the English Church, but which, through the changes wrought by the time, and the constitutional tendencies of all self-perpetuating corporations, had ceased to be represented in the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

The Church Missionary Society, for that was the name of the new organization, was formally inaugurated at a public meeting held at the Castle-and-Falcon Inn, Alder street. Among those in attendance there was not a single Bishop, nor any dignitary of the Church of England above the rank of a Parish Minister. Only eighteen persons attended the meeting, but among these, and the few associates from the country, who were added to them immediately afterwards, were found the following:

Rev. John Venn, Rector of Clapham, Surrey.
Rev. William Good, Rector of St. Ann's, Blackfriars.
Rev. John Newton, Rector of St. Mary's, Woolnoth.

Rev. Josiah Pratt, Assistant-Minister of St. John's, Bedford Row.

Rev. Thomas Scott, then lecturer at the Lock Hospital.

Mr. John Bacon, the sculptor.

Thomas Babington, Esq., M. P.

Rev. Charles Simeon, Cambridge.

William Wilberforce,

Charles Grant, (Lord Glenelg.)

The Society, having been duly organized, sent a deputation to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to present to him a copy of their rules, and to ask his favorable "regard,"—not patronage,—to the movement. The result of this application has been recently given to us in Mr. Pratt's Life. "The Archbishop was very candid," writes Mr. Venn to Mr. Scott, "and appeared to be favorably disposed; but, *as might be expected, he was cautious not to commit himself till he was more particularly acquainted with the subject.*" "His Grace," says Mr. Wilberforce, when narrating a second interview, eleven months afterwards, "regretted that he could not, with propriety, at once express his full concurrence or approbation of any endeavors in behalf of an object he has deeply at heart. He acquiesced in the hope I expressed that the Society might go forward; being assured that he would look on their proceedings with candor, and that it would give him pleasure to find them such as he could approve."

The organization of the Church Missionary Society, therefore, like that of its predecessor and associate in the missionary work in England, was voluntary and independent of ecclesiastical patronage. Even from the then amiable and venerable Archbishop of Canterbury the smile it received, when presenting itself for an Archiepiscopal welcome, was so cold and guarded as to leave no doubt that the civility was *personal* not *official*. Nor

was the unofficial and voluntary character of the Society permitted by either its enemies or friends to be a matter of dispute. At a meeting held in Bath, by Mr. Pratt and Mr. Bickersteth, towards the close of 1817, for the purpose of organizing an association in that city, the chair was taken by the Bishop of Gloucester, (Ryder,) a vice-patron of the Society, who opened the business by a call upon the churchmen of the city to unite in supporting the important institution on whose behalf they were convened. Mr. Pratt was just about to follow, when he was unexpectedly interrupted by the Archdeacon of Bath, who entered a protest, in the name of his Diocesan and brethren, against the invasion of the diocese by such a Society. He stated that a Missionary Society, connected with the Church,—that for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts,—was already in existence, and therefore the establishment of another Society was unnecessary, and even factious. And he made a personal attack upon the Right Reverend Prelate who occupied the chair, accusing him to his face of "intruding within the jurisdiction of a Brother Bishop."—(See Memoirs of Pratt, Carter's ed., 154.)

It will not be necessary for the present argument to pursue the history of the controversy which was thus originated. It is enough to say that it enlisted the attention and aroused the interest of the whole Anglican Communion; and that it ended, as controversies rarely do, in an amiable as well as a just acquiescence on the part of each institution in the co-ordinate claims of its associate as a co-worker in the missionary field. What I cite this paragraph for, however, is to show that the attitude of the Church Missionary Society was that of a *voluntary organization exercising the right of organizing branches in dioceses even where the diocesan might be indif-*

ferent or hostile to the movement; and that this claim of the Society was brought in the most public and conspicuous manner to the notice of the Church.

Now, such being the case, let us see what has been the verdict of the Church of England as to the propriety of this claim. And perhaps it cannot better be given than by the list of officers who are to be found as sanctioning the proceedings for 1856–7. In the report, which now lies before me, we find no longer the names of Venn, of Simeon, of Newton, and of the unofficial but earnest and noble men who formed the management fifty-seven years before. They have gone to their reward, and perhaps, if permitted to return to their labors, scarcely would recognise in the mitred and titled band who met at St. Bride's, Fleet Street, on May 4, 1857, to hear the sermon of the Bishop of Carlisle, the successors of the twenty or thirty gentlemen who inaugurated the meeting at the Castle-and-Falcon. At the head of the list of those now sanctioning the Society, and yet at the same time acting in subordination to its president, the Earl of Chichester, come the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, followed by forty-one Bishops, being a large majority of those of the Anglican Communion.

So far as personal acquiescence and support, therefore, are concerned, the voluntary missionary principle has received in England, the sanction of the Episcopal bench. Nor has this sanction been entirely unofficial. At the late meeting of the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Bishop of Oxford, as chairman of the Missionary Committee, reported, among others, the following resolution, which received an unanimous assent:

"*Resolved*, That the parochial clergy be advised to bring before their congregations, in addition to all local claims, the duty of promoting the interests of our holy religion, both abroad and at home, in two sermons, at

least, with collections, every year; one for the general wants of the church in the diocese, and the other for its still wider operations, both at home and abroad, *the selection of the special instruments of the church's work, to which the funds should be appropriated, being left to the choice of the clergyman and his parishioners.*"

If I rightly understand these facts, they lead to the conclusion that the general if not the unanimous sense of the Church of England has pronounced in favor of

1. Voluntary missionary organizations acting independently of Episcopal or governmental control.

2. Entire freedom on the part of the parochial clergy and their congregations in selecting either of the agencies now in existence.

But how, may be the next inquiry, has the voluntary system worked? And here, I apprehend, we will have little difficulty in framing a reply. We have both phases of operation in the English Church. For one hundred years the monopoly system prevailed. The Propagation Society stood alone, and had besides this, the benefit of the king's annual recommendatory letters. For fifty-seven years the opposite system has prevailed. Two foreign missionary societies have existed, and in the last few years, by the withdrawal of the queen's letters from the Propagation Society, the two have been placed on the same level. Let us look, then, at the financial working of the system. This will be abundantly shown by the following table:

PROPAGATION SOCIETY.

Years.	Av. am't Receipts.	Total Receipts.
1769 to 1788	£ 4,114.	
1789 to 1808	3,780.	
1829 to 1848	19,337.	
1849		£ 67,489
1850		62,365

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Years.	Amount.	Average.
1799 to 1802	£ 1,284	£ 321
1803 to 1806	7,096	1,774
1807 to 1810	11,699	2,924
1811 to 1814	18,656	4,664
1815 to 1818	78,074	19,518
1819 to 1822	121,753	30,438
1823 to 1826	152,608	38,152
1827 to 1830	188,467	47,114
1831 to 1834	187,575	46,893
1835	68,432	68,432
1836 to 1839	322,424	83,106
1840 to 1843	431,018	107,754
1844 to 1847	430,628	107,456
1848 to 1851	411,970	102,992
1852	118,674	118,674
1853	120,932	120,932
1854	123,915	123,915
1855	130,000	130,000
1856	139,000	139,000

The receipts of the Propagation Society for 1856, amount to £104,470, making in the aggregate for the two societies nearly £250,000; being an hundred fold as much as was produced by the monopoly policy of the last century.

But, it may be said, the policy of monopoly missionary boards is sustained by the experience of the leading Protestant communions of this country. I shall not stop to consider how far this is the fact. If a critical examination be entered into, it will be found, I apprehend, that there is scarcely any one of the larger Protestant communions among us, whose members have not an election open to them between two or more missionary agencies. For, to the non-Episcopal communions, there is in the lowest sense the alternative opened of their distinctive Board, and the American Board of Commis-

sioners for Foreign Missions.* But I pass this point, which is not essential to the present argument, in order to observe that the condition of these religious bodies is in this respect widely different from that of the Church of England. From that Church they are most of them secessions. I am far from entering into the merits of such separation. The responsibility of schism is often as much on those who drive others off, as upon those who go. The verdict of posterity, I cannot but believe, will be that the two most disastrous shocks which the Church of England ever received arose from the application of the Conformity Acts to the Puritans in 1680, and to the Methodists in 1780. These measures were in fact a departure from the tolerant and catholic platform which the Anglican Communion, as a national Church, adopted at the Reformation. If they have been peculiarly disastrous to her,—diminishing her hold on the middle classes and the poor, abridging her practical nationality, severing from her some of the most devoted of her sons, reducing the standard of piety within her borders,—such a state of facts goes no small way to prove the importance of allowing, in a national Church, full liberty in all matters within the range of orthodoxy. But I pass this point, for the purpose of noticing that the very fact of the communions of which I speak, severing themselves on matters of temporary controversy, made them, not

* On this point I have been favored with the following note from a much venerated friend:

"At the annual meeting of the American Board, which was held in the Session Room of the Murray Street Church in New York, in 1832,—Rev. Dr. Miller strongly advocated the establishment of the Presbyterian Board of Missions; and at the same time expressed his entire confidence in the American Board, and his intention to continue his contributions to its funds, as he had formerly done. He continued to be a corporate member of the latter Board for some years after this; and if my impression is correct, up to the time of his death."

national and catholic, but eclectic. The very nature of their existence renders it incumbent on them to present in sharp and intolerant precision the dogmas to promote which they seceded. And when new and heterogeneous, though orthodox views spring up in their own body, the remedy is not to enlarge their borders so as to tolerate the new opinions, but to have a new secession. They maintain their missionary unity by breaking their organic integrity.

Take, as an illustration of this, the Methodist Communion. It differed in England from the Established Church, not as to any question of doctrine, but as to the most efficient way in which the Church could be worked. The day is now passed in which the sincerity of John Wesley's attachment to the principles of the Church of England, as well as his noble zeal and indefatigable industry in the cause of Christ, can be questioned. He was a great Missionary, the greatest the Protestant Church ever knew, and it was a sad day for our communion when she lost him. But he went forth—partly impelled by a too hasty enthusiasm—partly driven; and he went forth, let it be ever remembered, on a question of missionary mechanism. I will not stop here to say that if conscientious and faithful men can differ on points of mere expediency so widely, as to make an ecclesiastical separation the only alternative to ecclesiastical toleration, how important it is for the Church to learn wisdom from the past, and to grant that liberty now which she refused in 1780! It is sufficient on this point now to say, that—as the Methodists seceded from us on a question of missionary organization,—as their distinctive denominational features were thus eclectic, not catholic—as they worked into their constitution one single and arbitrary method of Church extension, instead of yielding to their constituents a wise liberty—it was

natural enough for them to impose upon their members the yoke of compulsory uniformity. But how has it worked? First in 1785, went off the *Primitive Methodists* who wanted liberty in one matter of mechanism. Then in 1792 went the *Republican Methodists*, for like reasons. Then in 1816 went the *African Methodists.* In 1819 went another under a similar title. In 1820 went the *Stillwellites.* In 1828, on what was peculiarly an economical question, for it concerned chiefly the admission of the local preachers to an equal share of government with the itinerants—went the *Protestant Methodists.* Then came the great division of the Church, north and south; a severe shock to the country as well as to the Methodist communion, and one which could readily have been averted had the principle of toleration in non-essentials been maintained. The consequence is, that the Methodist Communion has now fallen into ten distinct organizations. By exacting *uniformity* it has lost *unity.*

The Romish Church gives us a lesson of the contrary policy which we may well study. That wily, though dangerous communion well knows that to preserve dogmatic unity there must be missionary freedom. She presents no less than three voluntary foreign missionary societies to her members, whom she invites to contribute at their election through either, the "Lyon's Society for the Propagation of the Faith," the "Leopoldine Society," or the "Society of the Holy Children." In home missions she opens an almost infinite number of agencies. The religious orders sanctioned by her, each of which is a missionary society by itself, approach to nearly one hundred in number. They are so constructed as to strike almost every variety of taste. Persons of ardent and passionate temper, who look with favor upon "new measures," (as the fashion among the Congregationalists has lately been to call them,) she points to the Redemp-

tionists and Passionists as forming organizations which unite the most vehement preaching with the most dramatic machinery. To the sedate and contemplative, who look upon the propagandism of a holy and placid life as far more effective than the most exciting eloquence or the most splendid displays, she introduces the recluse Carthusian, who never mixes with the world at all, and the compassionate Carmelite, who mixes with it only in deeds of mercy. To the philanthropic she exhibits the brethren of St. John's and Camillus, as day after day they pursue their hospital rounds; to the polite and literary, she presents the courtly and accomplished Benedictines, at the same time the best editors of the classics, and the feeblest defenders of the faith, the church ever knew.

If the sketches which I have given of the missionary operations of our own and other communions be correct, we have abundant material on which an inductive argument of no little force can be placed. The conclusion which we would thus reach is that LIBERTY IN THE CHOICE OF AGENCIES IS AN INCIDENT OF CATHOLICITY. Compulsory uniformity in mechanism may be practicable in an eclectic or sectarian communion, but is rejected by the very first principles of one which is catholic and national.

It certainly is not necessary to go into any labored proof that as between comprehensive or catholic, as distinguished from eclectic or sectarian communions, the Episcopal Church in the United States ranks with the former rather than the latter. Even in doctrine we allow a wise liberty on points which though within the range of orthodoxy, have been, on the one side or the other, the nuclei around which separate and divergent communions have hung. Our Articles were meant as the symbols of peace and comprehension. They were broad enough at one time to shelter the supra-lapsarian

Calvinism of Archbishop Whitgift. They were broad enough at another time to shelter the mild Arminianism of Secker and of Tillotson. No one now, it may be well asserted, will maintain that the positive faith and burning zeal of John Newton, were out of place in the communion he did so much to revive. No one will assert that the majestic sense of Bishop Butler was out of place in the communion he did so much to adorn. We may now well afford to place Leighton and Ken alike within the sanctuary both of our affections and our denominational sympathies, though the saintly piety which belonged to each, was united to doctrines far more widely divergent than those which have divided sects. "Brother Hooper," said Ridley, when the two came to be burned, "we may have been two in *white*, but now we will be one in *red*." In other words, those who in former times were divided as to episcopal vestments and surplices, became afterwards fused by the fire of persecution. It is a lesson which the Church has learned late, but we trust is learning thoroughly—toleration within the range of orthodoxy, liberty in the choice of agencies for the carrying out of her great mission.

But the question we now discuss does not involve even any of the allowable divergences of doctrine. If it did, the liberty asked for is perfectly defensible. But to sustain the principle of compulsory uniformity in missions, we must take the ground that even on the subject of mechanism there is to be no liberty allowed to the convictions of individual contributors. It will be enough to establish, therefore, the impolicy of such a system, if we show that there are even now in our immediate communion, two schools of opinion each widely and conscientiously differing as to not merely the *best* but as to the *only* way in which the Church is to be success-

fully pressed. We are reduced, therefore, to the alternative of saying either that the Episcopal Church is not comprehensive enough to retain these two schools, and that the one may therefore justly expel or silence the other, or of conceding that each school, in the exercise of its own convictions, may take the course to which it conceives itself conscientiously bound.

Let us consider, however, this point more closely. A large majority of our Bishops, as is well known, have given their official sanction to the opinion that the Rubrics requiring morning and evening service, even on Sunday, are not imperative in unorganized congregations, or mission stations. Of this majority, nearly the whole body agree in the position that the most efficient way of pushing pioneer missions is by a series of informal services in making up which, the discretion of the minister is to be largely consulted. Besides these, there is a section of the Church, neither deficient in zeal or strength, which believes that the free and earnest use in social meetings of extemporaneous prayer—the introduction and extension of such meetings whenever an opening is offered for them—the bold and faithful preaching of the cross informally as well as formally, wherever the preacher has access—are the primary agencies through which alone the missionaries of our Church can solidly lay her foundations.

On the other hand, we find opinions directly to the contrary avowed among us, by authorities equally conscientious, and equally entitled to recognition as a constituent part of our communion. Thus, Bishop Upfold of Indiana, says, when speaking of the most important of the resolutions of the large majority of his Episcopal colleagues :—"This resolution, it appears to me, if acted upon by any clergyman, would be in contravention of Canon XLV. of 1832, both in letter and in spirit, and I

advert to it to caution you, my brethren of the clergy, against availing yourselves of the permission it appears to accord, so that you may not make yourselves liable to ecclesiastical censure for a violation of that canon." Nor is Bishop Upfold alone in this view. His position has been seconded and urged by a body which, if it be a minority, is at least strong and respectable.

Now here we have a difference of opinion going to the very root of the question of missionary machinery. Those conscientiously holding the first view may be pardoned in preferring a missionary who will press the Church in that way alone in which they think it can be savingly and effectively pressed; those holding the second view equally conscientiously interpose an episcopal prohibition upon the missionary who desires to avail himself of the advantages thought so important by the first. And yet, divergent as these opinions are, I apprehend our Church legitimately comprehends both, and secures to each the right of missionary action in the way that it thinks best. Nor do I see any particular harm in this. If it be said that there is to be a coerced uniformity, and that the party who happens to be in the ascendant for the time being is to be empowered to make those who differ from him, to work under him or not to work at all, then I apprehend there will be dissension if not schism. Each party will struggle for the ascendancy, and the struggle will create party feeling, where it does not produce an actual disruption. It was thus the great Methodist schism was caused. John Wesley would never have left the Church of England had the liberty allowed by our American Bishops been allowed to him by their English predecessors. If, on the other hand, it is understood that each element is to be allowed to push the Church in its own way, I can see little but good. Those who prefer a strictly liturgical

system, will find not only a channel open to their zeal, but will be able to do what those who differ from them could not do so well—minister to the religious wants of that class of the community whose intellectual structure is such as to make them crave the æsthetic in public worship, as distinguished from the more practical and homely. Those who prefer a mixed system will also not only be able to work efficiently and to themselves healthfully, in the missionary field, but to present the gospel, through a combination of stated with social worship, in the way in which it will most effectively strike large and important classes. "There are many voices," says St. Paul, "and none of them without signification." There are many classes of hearers, and each of them open to a call which strikes it with a distinctive emphasis. Is it not wiser both for the Church, and for the masses to whom she is sent, that to each element she should speak intelligently, so that, in the exercise of her Pentecostal power "all men"—"Parthians, Medes, Elamites,"—those whose heart responds only to the solemn sweeps of the chant, as well as those in whom the passionate utterances of the rude hymn in the field-meeting awaken their first conviction of sin—should hear her speak in their "own tongues the wonderful works of God?"

Let us rise, however, from the particular branch of Christian effort which we have before us to the general basis of liberty or restriction on which the whole mechanism of missions must rest. There is no principle which will require a compulsory uniformity of organization in the home or foreign missionary field, that will not require a compulsory uniformity of organization in all other departments of Christian labor. If we must confine our confidence and limit our beneficence to one Missionary Board, we must do the same in reference to all publication and education societies. Certainly the

society that issues tracts, and the society that educates Ministers, enter at least as deeply into the vitals of the Church as the society that sustains missionaries. We cannot on principle constitute a monopoly agency for the one, without constituting a monopoly agency for the other. But what would have become of our Church in time past if such had been the case? What would have become of the great foundations of Cambridge and Oxford, the one swelled by the beneficence of whig and low Church, the other by that of tory and high Church contributors? Did not the very distinctiveness of these great institutions lead in a great measure to the splendor of their endowments? Has not this distinctiveness proved its own wisdom in the generous rivalry it has produced, in the increase of charity it has generated, in the literary culture as well as the theological energy it has developed? What would have been the condition of the Church of England, if she had not supported the comprehensiveness of her creed by a corresponding comprehensiveness in her schools of learning?

Nor, if we take our own country as a test, will the conclusion be very different. Had the plan of a federal monopoly seminary been carried into effect, the Church might have spoken in monotone, but the single note which she could then have uttered would have struck but a single chord. The error in such a course has now been universally conceded. We have now at least five other seminaries, which though diocesan in name, are general in operation; those of Alexandria, Gambier, Middletown and Nashotah. To one of these, or else to the new institution now projected in the South, there is scarcely a Bishop of the Church that has not given his adhesion. It is not too much to say, that if a proposition were now introduced into the General Convention, to require all candidates for orders to graduate in a speci-

fied institution, it would be almost unanimously rejected. But why? The answer is, because the Church has now discovered that in the structure of her Ministry, she is to allow free play to the several elements of which she is legitimately composed. But when this Ministry is ordained, is she not to allow equal liberty in providing means for their support?

But we may go still further, and say that if the principle hold good, it will exact a compulsory fusion of literary agencies. If it be right that the Church should interfere to consolidate boards in the one department, it is right that she should in the other. A literary fusion, a monopoly in the preparation and issue of books, is at least as important as a missionary fusion, a monopoly in the support and sending of missionaries. Let us see, then, how the principle bears this new test.

And here it may be remarked, that if there is anything in which the comprehensiveness of the Church of England is exhibited, it is on this very topic. It is the very breadth and fullness of her literature which are its chief glory. To this she owes the logical exactness of Chillingworth, the majestic strength of Barrow, the brilliant point of South, the lustrous rhetoric of Jeremy Taylor, the expository and doctrinal closeness of Ezekiel Hopkins, the didactic simplicity and elegance of Tillotson, and the shrewd sense and perspicuous reasoning of Paley. So it has been even to our own day. There is room, and never more so than now, when the multiplying varieties of mind, which a diffused education produces, require a multiplying variety of agencies; there is room still on the book-shelves and in the libraries of our communion for the manifestation of each of the interests which our communion unites. See, indeed, how important has this freedom been to us, even in our own generation! There stands Arnold, marching in all the vigor

of his manly but restive mind, from the theological obscurity and doubts into which his impatience of systems led him in his earlier essays, to the, as yet, hardly perfect, but most beautiful evangelicism of his closing works. There is the pastoral fidelity connected with the exegetical and doctrinal eclecticism, and the philosophical breadth of Archer Butler. There is the showy eloquence of Melville, a little too gaudy for the closet, and a little too elaborate for the pulpit, and yet, like a botanical garden, if not good for scenery, at least admirable for horticulture; and there, beyond all others in worth, if not in pretension, are the excellent expository and hortatory sermons of Blunt and Bradley. Behind each utterance there is a specific sense. Through them the free voice of the Church speaks, never so potent as when free, calling through each agency to a particular class of minds whom no other agency could reach, and not only raising the literary character of the Church, but diffusing the truth with a comprehensiveness which it requires a comprehensive policy to ensure.

And observe that, whenever we have deviated from this policy, our glory and our power have been proportionably diminished. It was by the application of this very doctrine of compulsory uniformity, that we lost the passionate eloquence of Whitfield, the sagacious sense of Wesley, and the apostolic zeal and vigor which enabled the first of these great men to arouse a nation, and the second to found a Church. Through it we lost something more — the works and examples of those great confessors, the Puritan divines of the Restoration; who, in their exodus, spoiled us of the jewels and wealth of an orthodoxy, which we were too indifferent to appreciate; and of a literature, whose depth and fullness we were too luxurious and inert to fathom. Look back and see who issue from the closed doors of those Cathedrals

and Churches, from the metropolis down to the hamlet—those doors which a compulsory and intolerant moderatism (of all tyrannies the most arbitrary and ungenerous) is not only shutting, but bolting on the inside! There,—preceded by the common hangman, in whose hands are to be seen the proscribed writings of men of whom their age was not worthy,—there go John Bunyan, and Baxter, and Owen, and Fuller, and Philip and Matthew Henry. And there, mightier than all, goes a great shade, taking with him as he goes from this his mother Church, the glory of the greatest epic poet whom the world ever knew. What, indeed, might the Church not have been, had her heart been as comprehensive as her standards! "I agree to them all, every word," said Philip Henry, as he was driven from Broad Oaks, because his love to what really was the Church, was too real and thorough to enable him to take an oath to support elements new and intolerant. "It draws my very heart's blood," cries another, in the bitterness of his spirit; "but, while I can make Bishops overseers, I cannot make them Apostles, nor can I abandon free prayer." "I give up that I love," said a third, "to those that love it not; but it is they, not I." So spake the expelled divines of the Restoration; and it is well that we should sit and listen, before we proceed to apply the same shackles which drove them from us. Unity in essentials let us have—in the great truths in which, as John Newton told us, all religion centres, that "man is a great sinner, and Christ is a great Saviour;"—unity in government, recognizing, as we do, Constitutional Episcopacy, as to us the only form to be received;—unity in solemn worship, holding to the great features of the liturgy in our public congregations;—but not uniformity in those developments of individual zeal and purity, in which, in

order to make substantial truth, there must be circumstantial variety.

Now, on such a view, what are we to do? Two courses, if a change be resolved on, may be presented. The one is to abolish the domestic committee, or what in some respects is an equivalent, to proceed as if it did not exist, and to establish outside of it independent voluntary organizations. Were such an alternative as this made necessary, by a reversal of the present comprehensive policy of the Board, there would be no hesitation in accepting it. But as things now stand, the existence of the domestic committee is not inconsistent with the existence of voluntary organizations, such as the Missionary Association for the West, which it recognizes as an auxiliary. As long as the relations between the domestic committee and its Philadelphia auxiliary continue to be marked by the same frankness and justice that now exist, it is difficult to see how the cause either of missionary efficiency or of ecclesiastical comprehensiveness can be benefitted by the withdrawal of the sanction now given to the latter. The abolition of the domestic committee, on the other hand, would be attended with much positive loss. That committee never was better officered or more faithfully managed than now. It possesses facilities which a less general institution could not possess, of circulating missionary intelligence through the Churches, of sending out agents, and of keeping up generally a healthy agitation in the missionary work. It possesses the confidence and receives the donations of many whom no merely voluntary organization might attract. The attempt, therefore, to supplant it by a new voluntary organization, would be an experiment of which the mischief would be certain and positive, and the good remote and doubtful.

The alternative, however, which is now more likely to

be pressed on us, is that of the reversal of the action recognizing the Missionary Association for the West as an auxiliary, and the introduction of a system of Canons compelling collections to be forwarded from each Church to the central Board. With this course the experience of the English Church, and the true policy of our own, are in conflict. In addition to these difficulties, which I have already noticed, there are one or two practical considerations which should make us pause, before we attempt anything like a new system of restriction. These considerations I may be permitted briefly to allude to in conclusion.

Any attempt, to establish a missionary monopoly, would be futile. Men are very prone to give according to their own preferences, and not to give when those preferences are not secured. Wealth is in its nature fastidious. Never are the indications of conscience more jealously sought and more faithfully followed than when they come to caution us against a grant of funds to a suspected object. And no where do these conscientious doubts vary more in their direction, than in the large mercantile cities, from whence the missionary funds of our church are mainly drawn. In those cities are found in full development, representatives of the several schools which our communion includes. Take a single test, and observe how in the more metropolitan cities, we have almost as many phases of rubrical relaxation as we have churches themselves. In one congregation we have the church with daily service, both weekly and on the Lord's day. In another we have the church with no daily service at all, except on the Lord's day, but with prayer meetings or lectures, formal or informal, on almost every night of the week. In one, the heart of the worshipper finds in the swell of the simplest of hymns, sung perhaps by voices wholly uncultivated, to a

tune which the world would call Methodist, a charm which the most exquisite music would fail to produce. In another the elements of a soul otherwise torpid, are rocked to their centre by those grand utterances which the organ in its fulness, and choral singing in its perfection, are so capable of giving. To one there is a preciousness in the plain barn-like church, and the low ceilinged lecture-room which no cathedral can equal. In another the tiled pavement, the fretted roof, the richly painted windows, the solemn alternations of the ritual, open fountains otherwise unsealed. Nor are these the mere inflections of taste. If not convictions—they are prejudices—abundantly strong enough to prevent the individual contributor from giving to any agency whose workings do not harmonize with his personal convictions. The consequence is, that by creating a monopoly missionary agency we divert from the Church the contributions of at least some of those important classes who, from the very fact of the earnestness of their convictions, are those, whose zeal, if rightly used, would produce the most princely gifts to the missionary cause.

"But," it may be said, "why not create a central agency of moderate views, which would represent all classes and exclude none?" The experiment, I may remark, has been tried. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, was for nearly an hundred years in the hands of moderate men, whose chief distinguishing feature was a tranquil conservatism which rejected excitement as strenuously as it did heterodoxy. So sensitive did it become to anything like agitation, that until waked up from its torpor by the advances of the Church Missionary Society, it would not even permit the letters of its missionaries to be published, or its claims to be made the subjects of a popular appeal. It altered its constitution so as to prevent any one voting who had not

been first approved by itself. Certainly from such a body, anything like a passionate agitation of the subject is not to be expected. It knows no necessity for Exeter Hall meetings, for itinerant agencies, for weekly and monthly sheets, filled with stirring appeals and interesting anecdotes. After a while it begins to have a prejudice against such vulgar methods of attracting public attention. Then, if there come a division in the Church, in which those to whom religion is a reality, are set upon and baited by those to whom religion is a form, the central agency, though perhaps in principle agreeing with the former as distinguished from the latter, finds itself allied with the latter in waging war against the former. It fears excitement and innovation. And such is the history of the Propagation Society. At one moment, it will be found charging with a relentless proscription upon those sincere, though in some respects, misguided men, who, under the lead of Ken and Sancroft, had at least the merit of protesting against the Erastianism of the seventeenth century. At another, it will repel with equal bitterness, the great element, which, under the guidance of Wesley, could have worked, if properly and kindly welcomed and guarded, so vast a renovation inside the Church. The fact is, that of all things, a compulsory moderatism is the most immoderate. Forgetting that Christianity in its dealings with the world is necessarily destructive of evil, as well as conservative of right, moderatism,—in proscribing what it calls extremes—proscribes what are the main motive powers of the Church. So it was that the moderatism of the Church of Scotland first trampled on, and then drove off the band of "extremists," who, under the guidance of Chalmers and Candlish, did not shrink to apply Gospel truth with Gospel zeal. So it was with the Church of England in its treatment of the

Methodists. Let it never be forgotten, that it was by the agency, not of "High," but of moderate churchmen, that the Methodists were forced from our borders. It was from latitudinarian bishops that the first blow came which drove Charles and John Wesley, then High Anglicans, from the pulpits of the communion they so much honored. And then, let us add to this truth of the intolerance of moderatism to others, the kindred truth of the inability of this same moderatism for the development of itself. The Propagation Society did not contribute over £4000 annually to the missionary cause, until, from being the sole organ of the Church, it became the voluntary organ of such as chose to contribute through its instrumentality. As one of two or more agencies, it had thirty times the income that it had when it had the sole possession of the field. And so it is with our own Domestic Committee. It receives from a part of the Church,—a large part, it is true, but still a fractional part,—a great increase on what it received from the whole. As an eclectic agency, it has nearly double what it had as a monopoly.* And on the other hand, a new agency has been opened, which, through the action and counteraction it has produced, has thrown out upon the West a new fund of contributions which that field would otherwise never have received.

Now are we to retrace our steps? It is a serious proposition, even if we survey the missionary work alone. But it is still more serious if we regard the general field of Christian labor. For if the genius of our Church exacts uniformity in one branch, it exacts uniformity in another. If a central board is to take from us all election in the designation of our contributions to missions, it must do the same office in respect

* See Note A.

to ministerial support, to Church building, to education, to tract and Bible publishing. What, therefore, I would respectfully urge is, not the introduction of any new system, but the expression of our increased confidence in the policy which has been the growth of the experience, both of ourselves and of our mother Church. For this purpose, I conceive nothing further is necessary, than a resolution re-affirming the action of former Boards in recognizing as constituent parts of our system, voluntary associations exercising the right of specific designation of their funds.

I am very truly yours,

FRANCIS WHARTON.

Gambier, April 15, 1858.

NOTE A. TO p. 38.

RECEIPTS OF DOMESTIC COMMITTEE.

Oct. 1st, 1847, to June 15th, 1848, 8½ months,	$23,956 14
June 15th, 1848, to June 15th, 1849, 1 year,	27,263 76
June 15th, 1849, to June 15th, 1850, 1 year,	30,932 75
June 15th, 1850, to June 15th, 1851, 1 year,	34,302 26
June 15th, 1851, to Oct. 1st, 1852, 15½ months,	30,395 50
Oct. 1st, 1852, to Oct. 1st, 1853, 12 months,	23,856 43
Oct. 1st, 1853, to Oct. 1st, 1854, 12 months,	38,404 15
Oct. 1st, 1854, to Oct. 1st, 1855, 12 months,	42,107 60
Oct. 1st, 1855, to Oct. 1st, 1856, 12 months,	47,245 17

RECEIPTS FROM

Oct. 1st, 1847, to June 15th, 1850, 2 years and 8½ months	$82,152 65
Average per year,	30,769 74
June 15th, 1850, to Oct. 1st, 1853, 3 years and 3½ months,	$88,554 19
Average per year,	27,247 44
Oct. 1st, 1853, to Oct. 1st, 1856, 3 years,	$127,756 92
Average per year,	42,585 64
The Receipts for the year ending Oct. 1st, 1857, were	$49,451 46

RECEIPTS OF MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION FOR THE WEST.

For 1854,	$2,841 85
" 1855,	3,188 99
" 1856,	6,506 44
" 1857,	5,710 55

25¢